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# Catch shadow, Hold light

Autumn Cipala

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

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Catch shadow, Hold light

By

Autumn Cipala

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Gail Kendall

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 2009





Catch shadow, Hold light

Autumn Cipala, M.F.A.  
University of Nebraska, 2009

Advisor: Gail Kendall

I aspire to make forms that quietly engage the viewer, inspire curiosity, and invite a sense of discovery. These are objects that ask one to slow down, and to notice the subtleties of form, surface, and function. My intention is for these vessels to be used mindfully.

An assuredness of form is essential to this work. Curves, volume and proportion are balanced with restraint. I prefer complex yet clean forms that are enhanced by soft translucent glazes. Consideration of balance continues as pattern is balanced with unadorned surface, cool color with warm, cup with saucer.

I am attracted to glazes that are most able to reveal the translucency of porcelain. These glazes are inviting to touch, and soft in texture and color. The glaze surface varies among pieces, either possessing a watery shine, a silky skin-like quality, or displaying both of these qualities as the glaze stretches and pools to articulate detail.

I am interested in light for its ability to capture one's attention as it illuminates: fleeting sunlight on a tide-pool, or light beaming through a window to fill a porcelain bowl, creating an illusion of suspension. Inspired by nature, the luminosity of translucent porcelain, and openwork, I am composing pattern with light and shadow.

The play of cast light and shadow, a lilting edge, a jewel-like pool of glaze collected in a shallow dip: these are treasures that reside on the periphery of our attention. I am engaged in bringing these outlying elements into the forefront. With

attention to detail, I hope to entice the viewer to linger in contemplation and reflection, developing an intimate relationship with the object.

I consider the motion of the body as it interacts with the object. A cup with no handle invites being held with both hands. This provides the opportunity to experience the sensation of feeling the texture of the object and temperature of its contents. The cup is lifted to the mouth and delivers fragrance, flavor, and nourishment. The saucer encourages a centering and symmetry in the body. There is a satisfaction in lifting and lowering the cup into its well-fitted resting spot, and delight to be found in the sound of a cup being placed in its saucer.

I look to historical ceramics for ideas and inspiration, and integrate elements of these works into my own as a celebration of our rich ceramic lineage. I am inspired by the work from many cultures, from China to Western Asia, North Africa, and the Americas: by work that embodies harmony, purity, elegance and a tranquil presence.

In my three years of graduate study, I have had the privilege to spend time in the reserve collections of several museums, handling historic works and learning by their example. I've traveled to Morocco, a culture that makes utilitarian pots out of necessity. Through these experiences I've sought to build a solid understanding of historic and contemporary ceramics, and in doing so I hope to comprehend my position in this continuum as a contemporary American potter.

In our culture, a handmade utilitarian object serves the purpose of providing emotional nourishment, as well as the nourishment, which comes from food. With my work I hope to communicate the sensations of serenity, presence and contemplation that I experience while making these objects.



Autumn Cipala  
Image List

- 1 – *Perforated Bowl*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 2.25 x 4.5, x 4.5, 2009
- 2 – *Cup and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Oxidation, 3.75 x 6.5 x 6.5, 2008
- 3 – *Carved and Pierced Bowl with Stand*, Porcelain, Cone 10, 11 x 8 x 8. 2009
- 4 – *Petal Saucer and Cup*, Porcelain, Cone 10, 3.25 x 5.75 x 5.75, 2009
- 5 – *Platter*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 2.5 x 13.75 x 13.75, 2009
- 6 – *Generous Cup and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Oxidation 5.25 x 8.75 x 8.75, 2009
- 7 – *Touched Cup and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 4 x 6.5 x 6.5, 2009
- 8 – *Chun Teapot and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 6.5 x 8 x 8, 2009
- 9 – *Carved and Pierced Bowl with Stand*, Porcelain, 4.75 x 5 x 5, 2008
- 10 – *Jade Carved Teapot and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 6.5 x 8 x 7.25, 2009
- 11 – *Perforated Cup and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 5.75 x 6.75 x 6.75, 2008
- 12 – *Lidded Ewer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction, 7.25 x 4.75 x 4.75, 2007
- 13 – *Poppy Teapot and Saucer*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Reduction and Oxidation, 6.5 x 8 x 6.5, 2009
- 14 – *Tureen with Stand*, Porcelain, Cone 10 Oxidation and Reduction, 8.75 x 12.75 x 12.75, 2009























































